

Supporting
Women out of
Homelessness
Spring 2017



Catherine House Inc. Newsletter



From the Chief Executive Officer



2017 saw the coldest start to winter in Adelaide since 1943 – and of course it hasn't been much warmer since.

Catherine House, as always, has been full to capacity with women seeking shelter from the bitter cold and from the traumatic events that brought them to homelessness.

It is a privilege to be a part of the journey as women rediscover hope for the future, recover, and make positive change going forward.

In the short time I have been here, I continue to be impressed with the changes we see in clients on a daily basis.

Sadly, not every story has a happy ending; some women need to come back to us several times before the effects of trauma and disadvantage can be managed and they can move forward in their journey. Catherine House prides itself on always giving people another chance. Never giving up on someone is a core value for the organisation.

I continue to be amazed by the support we receive from the community. Every couple of days we receive a phone call from a supporter, club, school, service group such as Rotary, even a group of friends, all wanting to know how they can support Catherine House. Can they organise a film night? Can they make us their charity of choice for their upcoming event? What about a cold plunge in the middle of winter! Community support plays a vital part in ensuring we have the financial ability to provide much needed services directly to our clients.

Some of recent our major donors are thanked in this newsletter – but from the bottom of our hearts, we thank you all. Every bit helps to change lives.

Louise Miller Frost

News Fundraising



You can't say our staff and supporters aren't committed!

On 20 August, six of our staff and several additional supporters including our Chair Jane Kittel, Senator Skye Kakoschke-Moore and Environment, Water & Natural Resources Department CEO Sandy Pitcher plunged into the icy waters off Glenelg to raise funds for Catherine House.

Our staff frocked up for the occasion and our own Deirdre Flynn won best dressed for racing across the sands in stilettoes and a strapless cocktail frock. Many thanks to Glenelg Rotary for organising this event.

If you or your workplace would like to support Catherine House by holding a fundraiser please contact our fundraising manager Jaylee on **8232 2282** or jayleec@catherinehouse.org.au

Your support is greatly needed and appreciated!



Tania's Story

Tania McHendrie, Winner of 2017 Adult Learner of the Year, Adult Learners Award

I never would have imagined that within two years of walking through the doors of Catherine House, I would have fulfilled many dreams that I thought were beyond my reach.

They were called dreams for a reason – a figment of my imagination, something I could only hope for, but never possible. It wasn't until I came to a place where there were other women facing their troubles, many much more challenging than I could ever fathom, that I realised I wasn't alone. We were together in our pain and struggles, and it was the women who were there to support us, and pick us up from the ground that were the true inspiration.

I will be forever grateful for the way I was treated in Catherine House – cleaners, cooks, administration staff

and volunteers all loved me to life. Until now, I was the walking dead. I wasn't here, I was too engulfed by my fear, self-loathing and racing thoughts and insidious beliefs. I was never judged at Catherine House, I was treated with respect, discipline, love, understanding and compassion. I needed that more than a bed and a meal on the table. Nothing else could combat the terror and hatred that was ripping me apart inside. Thank God for Catherine House.

So when Education Coach Cath Sarah suggested that I take part in "My Time, My Life, My Future", it was her belief in me that helped me step forward and give it a go. I had tried everything else, so why not? I cannot give up yet. It was that first step leading to many more steps, one after the other, that was the beginning of a wondrous journey of self-love. The women of Catherine House loved me before I could love myself and ever since then

I have put in daily action to learn and grow to love myself. I will need to put in that action, every day for the rest of my life, to keep growing.

Today I know that self-love is complete forgiveness, acceptance and respect for whom I am deep down – all my beautiful AND hideous parts included.

When I love myself, I take care of myself, honour my limitations, listen to my needs and respect my dreams enough to act on them.

When I love myself, my happiness, health and fulfilment are all of paramount importance because I realise that without loving myself, I will never be able to genuinely love others.....And that is my Number One goal today, to love others, just like the way I was loved at Catherine House.

A note from Deirdre

Director
Client
Services



Feedback from our clients is so important. We provide a range of ways to elicit this; the usual formal mechanisms are in place and we work hard to create a trusting environment where feedback comes direct to staff members or myself.

We receive many validating comments remarkably consistent in its expression of gratitude, for kindness, warmth, and acceptance shown them by staff. Clients write of a renewed sense of hope for their future. Feedback from family members be it an outpouring of grief or joyous relief, is a reminder that every woman that uses our services is or was part of a wider family.

It was important to remember this when we recently received a long and critical letter from a sister of a woman that voluntarily left our service months earlier. After checking the file, it was clear the client had not been honest with her family about her choices and situation and they were now struggling to see her so vulnerable and at risk again.

The hurt desperation and despair seeped through every word; her outrage that we had not been able to “fix” her sister was palpable.

While she was invited to talk through her letter to us, we had to advise that without her sister’s consent, we could not tell her much to help her understand.

We provide opportunities encouragement, work with barriers, but only the client herself can decide if she is ready, able or wants her life to be different. Yet many families are deeply impacted by the issues their loved one is dealing with. We sit with their hurt, anger and fear with sensitivity, care and respect, offering another chance for the woman when the time is right for her.

Deirdre Flynn

Catherine House turns 30!

Do you have a secret stash of photographs from Catherine House in the early days?

Perhaps you have some newspaper clippings or some arts and crafts from client art fairs. Or, maybe you have cherished memories you would like to share about working, volunteering, being a client with us, or attending some of our earlier fundraising events.

In 2018 Catherine House’ celebrates our 30th anniversary – we were founded by the Sisters of Mercy in partnership with Adelaide City Council and the SA Housing Trust, in 1988, to fill a homelessness service gap for women.

In preparation for our 30th milestone, we are seeking photographs, documents, newspaper articles and stories about our early days. In particular, we are really keen to hear the stories from former clients, volunteers and staff about their experiences at Catherine House.

If you have any items you would like to share with us – we promise we will look after them. **Please contact reception@catherinehouse.org.au or 08 8232 2282.**

Stay tuned to further updates of some exciting events for this incredibly special milestone!

Tomorrow’s leaders

Catherine House is close to the hearts of many St Aloysius College staff and students.

The two organisations have worked hand in hand for years, creating awareness about women experiencing homelessness and helping to solve this problem. As a member of an all-girls school and social justice community, it has become more apparent to me in recent years that there are varying issues that women face. Last week, my class had the pleasure of visiting Catherine House. As I sat next to Case Worker Deb I was overwhelmed by the love she felt for her work and the amazing changes that Catherine House is pioneering, I felt a sense of hope. There are so many ways in which this group work to help women experiencing homelessness, whether this is housing, food or simply offering a helping hand. This impact is drastic and changes the lives of hundreds every year. They have created a home for those without one; transcending the idea that home is simply a place. I have learnt from Catherine House that home is a feeling of unconditional love, support and acceptance. My society and culture group elected to fundraise for Catherine House for our social justice stall. I feel that as a young woman, it is important that we develop an awareness of this issue. Even the smallest act of kindness can make a difference. One never knows where life will take them, but if there is one thing I have learnt from the work of Catherine House, it is that the help of others can assist in finding the solution to any problem.



Pictured with Michelle Cornish (centre) are from left: Cath Sarah (Catherine House Education Coach) Louise Miller Frost (Catherine House CEO) Prof. Marie Wilson (Catherine House board member) and Dr Zoe Adey-Wakeling and Sandy Adey (Prof Adey's daughter and wife).

I never thought university was for me...

Catherine House is proud to announce Michelle Cornish as the recipient of the 2017 Kym Adey Catherine House UNISA Scholarship. Michelle is studying a Bachelor of Social Work.

Emeritus Professor Kym Adey AM created the scholarship in 2011 through a limited-edition series of sculptures, which were sold to raise money to fund the scholarship. He says he was inspired to support the women of Catherine House because of his commitment to education overcoming disadvantage and the advocacy of two strong women in his life—his wife Sandy and colleague, Carol Sutherland.

Michelle's educational journey began with the 'My Time, My Life, My Future' course. This course, a finalist in the Adult Learning Program of the Year category for the 2017 Adult Learners' Week awards, was instrumental in providing Michelle with the opportunity to design an education and employment pathway for herself.

And what an amazing start to study Michelle has had. Michelle told us that when she received her first mark – a “D” – she was devastated. Her lecturer had to explain to her that D meant Distinction!

“You have no idea how much this opportunity has profoundly changed me ... I am absolutely loving the course content. I have totally surprised myself.... I have done a lot better than I thought” she said.

One of the key requirements of the scholarship is to provide peer support to other Catherine House women. Michelle has already mentored two Catherine House client groups this year as part of the 'My time' course.



Tania is pictured above with Katrine Hildyard, MP and Award sponsor Anthony Kittel from Redarc.

Adult Learner of the Year

The 24th of August was a cold wet wintery night—but a very exciting one for Catherine House.

Former client Tania McHendrie won the 2017 Adult Learner of the Year at the Adult Learner Awards. Tania was presented with her Award by Katrine Hildyard MP, and gave a speech in front of her childhood idol, Amanda Blair.

A selection of staff from Catherine House and University of SA were on hand to celebrate with Tania, along with her own table of friends, family and supporters.

Tania won the award for her participation in Catherine House's My Time Program, which was also a finalist in the Program of the Year Award.

Meet our
Volunteers
**Scarlett
McClure**
IT Volunteer



From one of our newest volunteers
Scarlett McClure, IT Volunteer:

“Volunteering at Catherine House is a great fit for me and very rewarding. I am passionate about making IT skills and careers accessible to women and girls, particularly those who might not otherwise have a chance to learn these.

Computers are such an integral part of everyday life and not having an opportunity to learn puts many people at a disadvantage in both education and in the workforce. It’s been fantastic to watch the women achieve IT learning goals even in the short time I’ve been here - from simply using a USB stick, to applying for jobs online, updating a resume or even starting a blog!

I really enjoy that every lesson is different and I look forward to meeting more of the fantastic women at Catherine House and helping them to achieve their goals.”

Volunteer Professional Services Register Can you help?

Would you like to be able to contribute to the work of Catherine House? From time to time we require professional services to assist with one-off or small projects.

We are seeking people with the following professional skills who would be happy to be on our Register and contacted when the need arises. Currently we are seeking Graphic Designers, Photographers, a Voice Coach, Professional Writer/proof reader, Image consultant/stylist, Professional Historian, External paver cleaner.

If you are interested, please send an Expression of Interest to—reception@catherinehouse.org.au



My seat at the table

Recently, a woman arrived at our service who knew me personally- she had previously been an employee of a business I utilised regularly. She was so happy and relieved to see me, a familiar face in such an unfamiliar environment.

This woman was of a non-English speaking background, and now had the added stigma of being in a homeless shelter. A woman who once ran her own home, had worked full time hours but who unfortunately was now unable to work due to injury. Having been overseas to care for her sick mother, had now been cut off her Centrelink payments. She had no money, no income, her ex-husband was violent, she has limited English, and she now has no home.

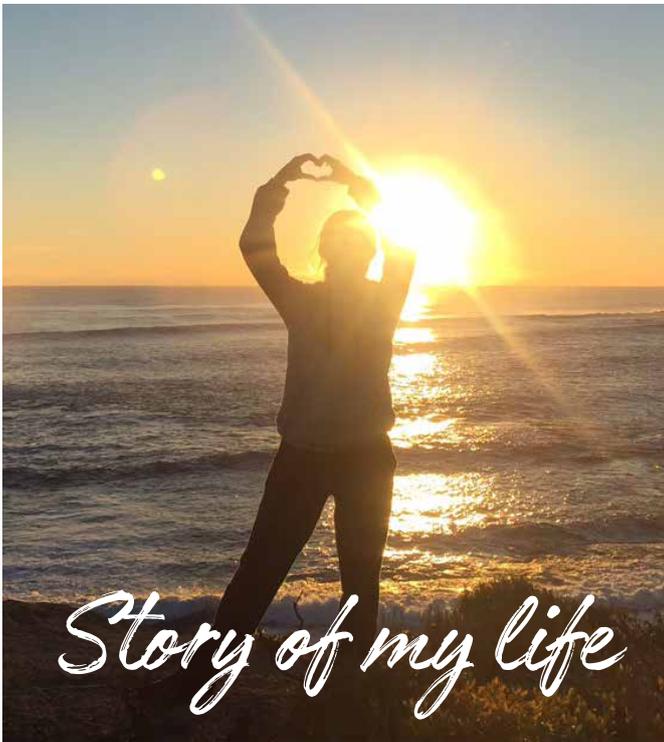
I watched this lady at the lunch table, to ensure the other women had welcomed her and were making her feel comfortable. I watched each of the sixteen women from all walks of life - different generations, from a myriad of cultures, all with a different sense of personal style and identity. As I watched, I realised this lady did not know where to sit - she was trying to ascertain the dynamics of who sits where, who talks to whom. I quickly navigated this and pulled out a seat for her, which she took gratefully.

At night, as I sat down for dinner at my dining table with my children, I was so conscious of being in ‘my’ seat, the position I always sit in. My children were in ‘their’ seats, as we do every night together. I thought of this woman. She would once have had her place too at her own dinner table. I was very much impacted by this, that something we all take for granted, something that every person deserves- their own seat at their own dining table in their own home- is something not one of our clients is able to experience.

That is my goal, for each of our clients - to help them work towards a seat at the table, where they belong.



Anna Gleave
Manager
Emergency Program



I want to write a short story of my life. The life of an ordinary woman, mother of three girls. After 20 years of domestic violence it is not possible to have a normal life...it is only the semblance of a life.

Without professional help living with domestic violence is like a time bomb...sooner or later life explodes. In my case it came 10 years after leaving my husband, the perpetrator. After two decades of being told I was nothing and could do nothing, I started to believe it was true.

Unfortunately, in desperate search for love I had ...another relationship failure. He was a gambler. We lost everything... I lived in a car. My life collapsed I was close to suicide...

**Then a miracle happened...
I meet the people from Catherine House.**

Never, to the end of my life will I forget the help that I received from this organisation. Support from professionals who know how to help victims of domestic violence. While there, I began a new chapter of my life and took part in a 7 week course "My Time, My Life, My Future" education program. As a consequence, I started studying at TAFE Beauty Services.

It is difficult to explain how much the psyche of a person changes after years of "brain washing". Without therapy and counselling; return to normality is almost impossible. Therefore I'm deeply thankful to Catherine House which in the literal sense saved my life. I have a huge gratitude to every employee for their warm heart to me. I am now doing things I have dreamed about for a long time, like returning to my love of dance!

Blanka—current client

What would make the most difference to women who are homeless?

This is our daily challenge — how to use our scarce resources to make the most difference. Every night, approximately 50 women are sleeping rough on the streets of Adelaide. Many more are sleeping in cars, couch surfing or staying in dangerous relationships. Every day, our Case Workers try to find other services for women in crisis because we are full. As fast as one woman leaves, another is in her place.

So we are thrilled to announce plans to expand our Emergency Program from 16 beds to a 20 bed service.

The Emergency Program was our first service, set up almost 30 years ago as a crisis accommodation service, and remains in high demand.

Four extra beds — a 25 per cent increase in this service — will mean an extra 1,460 nights of safety, and many, many more women who will be helped into permanent accommodation to rebuild their lives.

Women staying with us have much more than a roof over their heads—they have access to 1:1 intensive Case Worker support, Legal Aid, Centrelink, a GP, DASSA and education programs to assist them in accessing pathways to education and employment, and assistance in finding a permanent solution to their homelessness.

We are now seeking your support for the fit-out and staffing of the new rooms, which we estimate at the following:

- \$30,000** for building preparation
- \$10,000** for security works
- \$20,000** for furniture and fittings
- \$86,000** for additional case work and housekeeping (annual requirement)
- \$8,000** for food and consumables

Donations can be made via our website **catherinehouse.org.au** or by filling in the form overleaf.

Thank you for supporting Women out of Homelessness.

Yes! I want to support the work of Catherine House

I want to support the expansion of the Emergency Program at Catherine House

My Details Mr Mrs Miss Ms Other

First Name _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Phone _____

Email _____

I / We would like to donate the sum of

- \$219** a day provides a case worker to support 4 women out of homelessness
- \$40** will provide new pyjamas, underwear and slippers for a woman arriving at our centre
- \$500** will help fit out a room with linen, bedding and other furnishings
- \$1000 \$100 \$50 \$25
- other _____

Method of payment

Please charge my: Mastercard Visa

Card Number _____ Expiry date /

Name on card _____

Signature _____

enclosed is my cheque payable to Catherine House Inc

Please return to: Catherine House
PO Box 6031 Halifax Street Adelaide SA 5000 **or**

DONATE online at **catherinehouse.org.au**

All donations \$2 and over are tax deductible.
A receipt will be mailed to you.

Thank you

Thank you You make a difference!

Catherine House couldn't operate without your support. We are thankful for every dollar to support women who are homeless into new lives.

In the past 9 months, we have had a number of extremely generous donors and fundraisers. While many donors have requested to remain anonymous, we would like to publicly acknowledge the following individuals and organisations:

Organisations

Adelaide City Council
Adelaide Media Club
Adult Community Education
Cardijn College
Carreker Community Fund
Catapult Foundation
Catholic Charities
DCSI
Dominican Sisters of North Adelaide
Foundation Shine Inc
Glenelg Rotary
Gumeracha
Uniting Church
Holy Family School
Kelly Watson Endowment—
Australian Philanthropic
Services Foundation
Myers Colonnades
Myers Community Fund
Myers Rundle Mall
Renewal SA
Roman Catholic
Archdiocesan
Charitable Trust
SA Health
Southern Seekers Chapter
St Thomas School
St Aloysius College
Wood Foundation
Wyatt Trust

Individuals

Professor Kym Adey
Mary Batley
David Blackwell
Prue Blaikie
Catherine Boros
Pam Broadbridge
Cadzow / Vass family
Samara Churchett
Jane Doyle
Kate Duryea
Carla Ewart-Searle
Ronnie Faggotter
Jean Fordham
Stewart Gillies
Katherine Goode
Kathryn House
Jacinta John
Tim and Vicki Jordan
Jane Kittel
Martin and Betty Liebett
Wendy Michell
Jade O'Donohue
Lyndee Payne
Karen Richardson
Kate Simpson
Michael Tellis
Bruce Trebilcock and
Glenyce Durdin
Gillian Walker
Elizabeth Ward
Marie Wilson



Catherine House Inc.

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